IN MEMORIAM.

J. W. ROBINSON.

THE death of this well-known Cumberland man at the early age of fifty-four will be felt as a great loss to many of us.

It may be doubted whether any other man outside the Club had more or warmer friends within it. Though it fell to his lot only once to enjoy a season among the Alps, he had all the qualities which go to the making of a fine mountaineer—great strength and activity, vast endurance, cool judgment, keenness of observation, and an unusually retentive memory. It was his unrivalled knowledge of his native hills and rocks, and his constant readiness to place his knowledge and his time at the service of every genuine inquirer, that brought him into contact with so many of our members, of whom literally hundreds must have at one time or another learned what a delight it was to have a day's climbing with him.

Brilliant powers as a rock-climber, great natural intelligence, and a keen sense of humour, combined with a singularly gentle and loveable disposition to make him the most delightful of companions.

W. P. H.-S.

THE MOUNTAINS OF DANTE.—II.

BY DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.

I CONTRIBUTED to the tenth volume (pp. 400–5) of this 'Journal' a short article with the above title. It attracted at the time some attention in Italy, and led in that country to a further and more detailed discussion of Dante's references to mountains and mountain scenery.

I now return to the subject because I believe myself to be in a position to solve a particular problem which then baffled me and has, so far as I know, baffled most commentators since.

In the 'Inferno,' canto xxxii. line 29, Dante, in order to impress on his readers the thickness of the ice in the innermost circle of Hell, says that if 'Pietrapana' or 'Tabernicch' were dropped on it it would not even crack:

> che se Tabernicch
> Vi fosse su caduto, o Pietrapana,
> Non avria pur dall' orlo fatto cricch.

'Pietrapana' is, of course, easily recognisable as the Pania della Croce, the Carrara peak visible from Florence. But 'Tabernicch' has hitherto proved a puzzle. I will first quote what I wrote twenty-five years ago about its attempted identifications.*

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* *Alpine Journal*, vol. x. p. 402, *n.*

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'I accept provisionally—because I suppose they had some grounds for it—the commentators' identification of Tabernicch as a mountain in Hungary, though I can find no support for their assertion in geographical works. Mr. J. A. Carlyle somewhat cautiously says that Tabernicch is the name of a district containing a mountain, and a village called Tovarnich is found near the Lower Save in atlases. The only Taburnus known to Boccaccio is Virgil's Taburnus in Southern Italy. Massa was anciently Ad Tabernas Frigidas; the mountain behind, now Monte Tambura, may have been Mons Tabernicus. There is also an Avernich Kofel above the Predil Pass near Tarvis on the ancient amber route from the Baltic. Signor Giuliani of Florence, whom I have consulted, refers to a mountain near Adelsberg known in the middle ages as Tavorney. But, he justly adds, no identification of the least certainty has yet been produced.'

On looking again into the matter I find recent editors content, as a rule, to say that Tabernicch is probably a high mountain in Sclavonia. Mr. Tozer more wisely writes that it still remains to be identified. Mr. A. J. Butler alone comes near the mark in suggesting, on an authority he cannot now remember, that there is a mountain of this name in Bosnia. I believe that I now hold the clue to the exact situation of the mysterious mountain. It is to be found in the district of Focha, on the frontiers of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Montenegro. This district has recently been transferred from the Herzegovina to Bosnia by the Austrian Government.*

In the course of a tour in Bosnia and Herzegovina last autumn rode and drove for four days on or alongside the old paved caravan track which was once the commercial route from Constantinople to Ragusa. From the green valleys of the tributaries of the Drina it climbs up to the bare highlands of the Herzegovina through an extraordinarily picturesque limestone gorge, now known from its stream as the Sutjeska Defile. At the head of this gorge the mountains almost meet, rising on either hand in great cliffs crowned by fantastic horns and pinnacles, while so narrow is the opening that the track is carried on a wooden platform overhanging the stream.

In his paper on 'The Ascent of Maglich,'† M. de Déchy furnishes the following details as to the former importance of this natural gate. 'Even in the Middle Ages this route was extremely important, since—despite the descriptions which Ramberti (1533) gives us of the ill-treatment of travellers here, whether at the hands of custom-officers or of robbers pure and simple—the merchants of the Adriatic coast transported by it their wares from Ragusa to Bosnia, to Servia, and even to Constantinople, and it is astonishing to read how in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the French

* Mr. A. Evans, writing in 1880, assigns it to the Herzegovina. See *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

† *Alpine Journal*, vol. xiv. p. 420.

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Photo by M. de Dechy. *Swan Electric Engraving Co. Ltd.*

THE ROCKS OF TOVARNICH.

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ambassadors to the Sublime Porte reached their destination by taking this route from the coast.'

Again, 'There is scarcely room, beside the waters of the river, for the small path between the walls of the gorge which are scarcely fifty paces apart. On the left hand in particular the bare rock precipices were terribly grand and descended nearly perpendicularly to the stony bed, along which bubbled the clear waters of the stream. This gate once possessed its "keeper" or "guardian" "Vrata in Sutiska"—a name given in fifteenth-century documents to the castle the ruined walls of which can still be seen on the edge of a cliff of the Volujak. Opposite this castle and on the left bank of the stream was another smaller one perched on a projecting spur. Duke Stephen (1435–1460) established a customs station here, and bitter complaints were made by the men of Ragusa of attacks made by its occupants on the silver treasure which was being transported by the merchants of that great town. Both castles were hewn out of the living rock and accessible by a rugged path along which one person only could pass at a time. A couple of men, armed only with boulders of rock, could easily hold this defile against a whole army, and it was also customary to bar the way by means of a huge iron chain.'

In the collection of photographs presented by M. de Déchy to the Royal Geographical Society are two of this gate. He has written under them as a title 'Felsenthor Tovarnica.' On the Austrian Ordnance Map (1 : 75,000) the mountain on the left (N) of the gorge bears the name 'Tovarnich,' and the gorge itself is called Prosjecinica Vrata (vrata = gate).

It is surely obvious that a barrier presenting such remarkable natural and artificial features, and lying across a high road of commerce (which had probably existed from Roman times) was likely to impress itself on the memory of passers-by and to be a matter of description and discussion among the merchants of the Adriatic. The fame of its rocks might very easily have reached Dante's ears. He mentions the tombs at Pola, which, unless he made some unrecorded journey towards the eastern shore of the Adriatic, he must also have known of only by hearsay. Need we search any further for his Tavernicch? I think not.

THE MEMORIAL TO THE LATE C. E. MATHEWS.

We are indebted for the following account to the 'Birmingham Daily Post' of August 24, 1907.

An interesting ceremony took place on Tuesday last in the garden of Couttet's Hotel at Chamonix, on the occasion of the unveiling of a memorial to the late Mr. Charles Edward Mathews, erected by the English Alpine Club. The monument takes the form of a block of granite hewn to the shape of a frustum of a pyramid on a rectangular base, on one side of which a facet has been cut for the

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